



# Our Peninsula

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## Spruce Railroad Trail at Lake Crescent complete

OLYMPIC PENINSULA  
NEWS GROUP

**PORT ANGELES** — The Spruce Railroad Trail is now open for visitors.

The final phase of work for the Spruce Railroad Trail project at Lake Crescent is now complete. The trail improvements were part of a multi-year collaborative project to establish the Olympic Discovery Trail section on the north shore of Lake Crescent as a universally accessible, multi-purpose trail to be shared by hikers, bicyclists, equestrians, and people traveling in wheelchairs.

"This project completes the 10-mile Olympic Discovery Trail section around the north shore of Lake Crescent connecting to existing trail sections to the east and west," said Steve Gray, Clallam County transportation program manager.

"It provides bicyclists a non-motorized route around the lake so they do not have to travel on busy Highway 101."

Access to the Lyre River Trailhead on the eastern end of the Spruce Railroad Trail is currently via state Highway 112 to Joyce-Piedmont Road because of the closure of East Beach Road at U.S. Highway 101. That road remains closed for public safety due to debris

hazards following a wildland fire on the steep slope above the road this summer.

This final phase of the multi-year project included paving the newly constructed Lyre River Trailhead parking area as well as the entire 8-foot-wide trail. The Lyre River Trailhead parking area includes space for oversized vehicles and a horse trailer turnaround.

Also in the final phase, the Daley Rankin Tunnel was restored — the 450-foot long McFee Tunnel was completed in summer 2017 — and the final two miles of trail improvements were finished. Rockfall mitigation and retaining wall construction also were done.

The final portion of the multi-phase project involved a \$5 million contract that was awarded to Bruch & Bruch Construction of Port Angeles.

The park received close to \$1 million for this final contract through the Helium Stewardship Act of 2013 which provides cost-sharing funds to the National Park Service to improve infrastructure.

Clallam County provided funding from a combination of other local, state, and federal sources for the remainder of the contract including an approximately



PIERRE LABOSSIERE/PENINSULA DAILY NEWS

**Bicyclists and hikers enjoy beautiful weather at the new Spruce Railroad Trail on Wednesday on the north shore of Crescent Lake. Here a cyclist rides the trail just west of the Daley Rankin Tunnel.**

\$2 million grant from the Washington State Recreation and Conservation Funding Board under the Washington Wildlife and Recreation Program; \$100,000 federal Transportation Alternatives Program grant; \$858,000 of federal Surface Transportation Program funding; \$750,000 of County funding; and \$50,000 from the

local Peninsula Trails Coalition.

The Peninsula Trails Coalition (PTC), as the spearheading organization for the completion of the Olympic Discovery Trail, has advocated for and supported the project since its beginning, providing in-kind and other support of grants.

"This lakeside portion of

the ODT will undoubtedly come to be regarded as the signature jewel amongst many jewels along the trail," said Jeff Bohman, PTC board president.

"We commend Clallam County, Olympic National Park, and contractor Bruch & Bruch for seeing this challenging project through to a first-class achievement."

The project was a partnership between Clallam County and Olympic National Park. Federal Highway Administration staff provided construction management and general contract oversight.

The Spruce Railroad Trail follows the historic railroad grade of the Spruce Railroad, built in 1918 to harvest and transport aircraft-quality spruce for biplanes in World War I.

The railroad was almost complete in the fall of 1918, but the end of World War I that November meant the end of the operation and no Sitka spruce were ever processed at the local mills for biplanes. The railroad was purchased from the government and utilized as a common-carrier line and logging railroad after the war until it was abandoned in 1951.

Today, the railroad grade is part of Olympic National Park and the Spruce Railroad Trail is a piece of the planned 135-mile long Olympic Discovery Trail which will eventually connect Port Townsend to La Push, from Puget Sound to the Pacific Ocean.

For current trail, road, and travel information, see the park website at [www.nps.gov/olym](http://www.nps.gov/olym) or call the recorded Road and Weather Hotline at 360-565-3131.